1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *erramtogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *hanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kutki* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of which they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *erramlogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *wraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *kanal-kutul* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kuthi*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *kanal* at his *wraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *wraskal* or an *wragatta*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

9 [see cat. 116, p. 427. – Ambyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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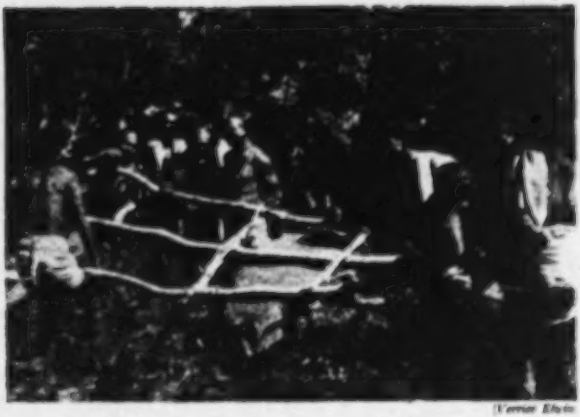
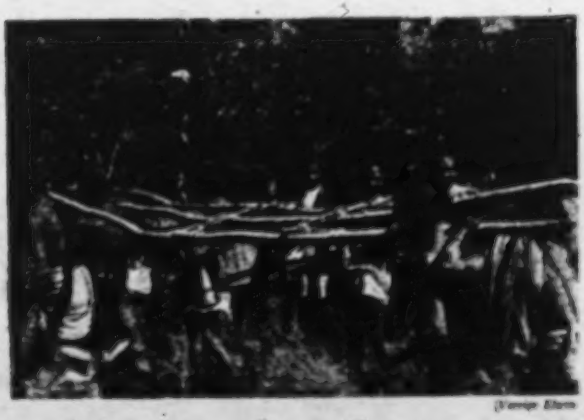


Scenes at the erection of a menhir at Mawsmai



[End Plate V]